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ABSTRACT

The paper examines co-occurrences of the major theme types with the various lateral verbs, as outlined in G. Kress and R. Hodge (1979), primarily unmarked/participant themes, other (non-participant) noun group themes, and marked themes. The data consist of 60 editorials from 2 major British newspapers, "The Times" and "The Sun," that presumably share similar ideologies, although they disseminate these ideologies through very different styles. It is suggested that the distinctive styles owe something to the choices of theme and lateral verb type made by the respective writers. Ratios of actional to relational verbs and those of several other subcategories for each theme type were made to discern patterns for interpretation in terms of rhetorical motivation. Findings suggest that in "The Sun," pronoun participants wee most numerous, where they were coupled relatively frequently with equative relational verbs, indicating evaluative manipulation. In "The Times," institution participants were the most numerous, in line with the newspaper's image as the voice of the establishment. Gender differences between the newspapers were also found. (Contains 15 references.) (NAV)

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Theme Choice and Lateral Verbs in newspaper Editorials

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Theme Choice and Lateral Verbs in Newspaper Editorials

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Abstract

This paper examines co-occurrences of the major theme types with the various lateral verbs, as outlined in Kress and Hodge, 1979. The data consist of 31 editorials from *The Sun* and 29 from *The Times*, two British newspapers from the same "stable" and, thus, presumably sharing the same ideology, but disseminating it through very different styles. Our starting hypothesis is that these distinctive styles owe something to the choices of theme and lateral verb type made by their writers. Therefore, we determine the ratios of actional to relational verbs and those of several other subcategories for each theme type. We attempt to discern patterns and interpret these tentatively in terms of rhetorical motivation. After a brief section on its theoretical background, the paper reviews various theme choices along with the verbs that co-occur with them, in three groups: unmarked/participant themes, other (non-participant) noun group themes, and marked themes.

Introduction

> News in the tabloid press and in the so-called quality press seems to be organised in rather different ways (V. Dijk, 1985:181).

This is true not only of macro text organisation but also at the level of local grammatical choices involving theme and rheme. In this paper, we will analyse 60 editorials from the British newspapers *The Sun* (31) and *The Times* (29) for correlations of choice of theme (for which we use Halliday's (1985) model) with the various verb types outlined in Kress and Hodge's (1979) lateral model.

A study of newspaper discourse should require no justification because it is probably both the most read of all text types and that of which the greatest volume is printed. Moreover, the two papers in question, both from the same "stable", represent the two ends of the press spectrum: *The Sun* is Britain's top-selling tabloid daily, known for its sensationalism, while *The Times* is a well-established quality paper. A comparison of these two particular papers should be doubly interesting, holding out, as it does, the possibility of shedding light on the question of how their presumably shared ideology is disseminated through such different styles.

As a starting point, we hypothesise that this difference in style has to do with linguistic choices made by the writers. In this paper, we will look at the choice of main verb, the central element of the rheme, from the perspective of the major theme types; unmarked participants, other nominal groups, and marked themes. Especially where statistics for *The Sun* and *The Times* diverge, we will attempt to discern rhetorical motivation for this.

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Theoretical background

Kress and Hodge (1979) explain that perception is not purely psychological but dependent on language, which reconstitutes the world and provides the systematic organising assumptions through which we see "reality". As the practical consciousness of society, language is:

> inevitably a partial and false consciousness. We can call it ideology, defining ideology as a systematic body of ideas, organized from a particular point of view (Kress and Hodge, 1979:6).

More practically, for our purposes, language is:

> an instrument of control as well as of communication. Linguistic forms allow significance to be conveyed and to be distorted. In this way hearers can be both manipulated and informed, preferably manipulated while they suppose they are being informed (ibid:6).

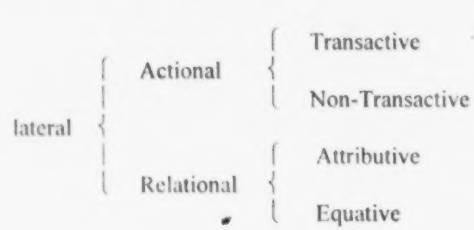
Our instruments of inquiry are, on the one hand, Halliday 's (1985) thematic categories and, on the other, Kress and Hodge's (1979) lateral model. For Halliday, firstly, theme is the start of the clause, what the message will be about, up to and including the first ideational element. However, when this definition would have produced a theme that did not really show "where the passage was going", we extended it to include the grammatical subject, following Thomas (1991), who claims that: "in unmarked sentences, [aboutness] is generally conveyed through the grammatical subject" (p. 253). Thus, for example, with adjunct-only themes that Halliday accepts, such as:

> *once I was a real turtle*
>
> *very carefully she put him back on his feet* (Halliday, 1985:39),

we would have included "I" in the first, "she" in the second.

As for the remainder of the clause, the rheme, we focus on the main verb, using Kress and Hodge's lateral model, which portrays "reality" in terms of two sub-models; the actional and the relational. The actional sub-model relates one entity - actor to another, affected by a process (transactive) or, alternatively, a single entity and a process (non-transactive). The relational sub-model involves writer comments on entities or actions and is broken down into attributives, which describe and are either possessive (eg. "Bill has courage") or qualitative (eg. "Paula is brilliant"), and equatives, which equate two concepts, usually entities, (eg. "John is president").

Kress and Hodge claim for their model, which they call essentially semantic, a higher degree of rigour and delicacy than was possible with the traditional distinction between transitive and intransitive. Unlike the latter, for instance, their lateral model would not confuse actions and non-actions (e.g. "the parcel *weighs* ten pounds"). Unfortunately, a semantic analysis is at least partially dependent on reader interpretation. This means that even their model fails to clarify, definitively, the philosophical question of what constitutes an action in a world subject to perpetual change (Halliday, 1993). So as not to become embroiled in the Kantian dilemma of subjective versus objective, therefore, we opted to analyse by form only, to ignore Kress and Hodge's mental versus physical process dichotomy, and to reduce their lateral model to:



Our procedure was, briefly, as follows:

1. Locate and number each independent clause.
2. Identify a theme (and, therefore, rheme) for each.
3. Determine the relative numerical importance of each category under consideration.
4. Analyse similarities and differences between *The Times* and *The Sun* and formulate hypotheses, if possible, as to their rhetorical motivation.

Findings

Participant themes

Participant themes are the norm in most text types. Not only are they statistically significant, but, together with their rhemes, they allow insights into a newspaper's ideology by revealing the sorts of people, groupings of people, things and concepts credited with acting on the world for good or ill. Participant choice indicates who or what is accorded actorial importance and the choice of lateral to co-occur with this participant is, in itself, a statement of opinion. As Kress and Hodge explain:

> Although the classification process is prescribed by convention, it is the speaker who performs it and who chooses which classification to apply (Kress and Hodge, 1979:9).

These choices many not register consciously in the mind of the reader, but their influence is such that we usually know which papers make which and choose a paper on this basis;

> In most cases the paper that challenges our own assumptions least of all (Ibid:15).

What, then, are the predominant participant choices in *The Sun* and *The Times*? What, if anything, are they shown as doing?

Table 1. Participant Themes v lateral Verbs (%)

		Average		Named		Title		Pronoun		Institution		Discourse	
		S*	T*	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
Actional	T	46	44	32	51	40	40	45	44	57	54	64	100
	Non-T	29	19	46	34	20	60	31	22	24	27	27	0
	Passive	8	11	14	7	20	0	6	10	11	5	0	0
Relational	Attributive	11	18	4	7	20	0	10	18	5	10	9	0
	Equative	6	8	4	0	0	0	8	6	3	4	0	0

* S = Sun, T = Times

The figures for participant themes can be seen in Table 1, above. It is to be noted that all figures are percentages of the total occurrence of a given theme taking given verb types. It should be borne in mind that the table masks whether a category is sizeable or not. In particular, discourse participant in *The Times* has only one occurrence. Figures are rounded up or down to avoid decimal points. It should also be remembered that, while passives have been separated for the sake of clarity, they are also transactives.

Named participants

A major choice in both papers is named participant, which makes explicit an actor's identity, including her or his name, though it is relatively more used in *The Sun* (possibly due to that paper's emphasis on private individuals). First of all, we can say that an actor thus made explicit is almost sure to be portrayed as actionally potent: 92 % of named participants in *The Sun* and 92 % in *The Times* take actional verbs. These are well above the average overall ratios for actionals, of 83 % in *The Sun* and 74 % in *The Times*. Relationals are correspondingly low, with only 8 % and 7 % in *Sun* and *Times*, respectively; well below the average for these verb types.

In Sentence 2 of the example below, a named participant theme, (John Major) is coupled with an actional verb (is objecting to) in a way that is portrayed as positive and forceful by *The Sun*:

> 1. Germany and France are planning their own private army. 2. John Major is objecting to this force outside the control of NATO. 3. He is dead right. (The Sun, 19.10.91)

Analysis of the subcategories reveals that all *Times* relationals are attributives, likely to denote description rather than evaluation, but there are too few in *The Sun* to be conclusive. Of actionals in *The Sun*, 50% (13) were non- Ts (non-transactives); a third Ts (transactives) and a small number passive Ts, suggesting that individuals in *The Sun* are relatively unlikely to be doing anything. Often non-Ts denote speech. Given that, overall, 65 % of *Sun* actionals are Ts, this is a striking reversal indeed.

In *The Times*, contrarily, the ratio is more normal: 55 % of actionals are Ts; 37 % non-Ts and 8 % passives. Here too, non-Ts account for more than their average of 30 % ; but there is no reversal of the positions of Ts and non-Ts, as there is in *The Sun*. A majority of *Times* actors, presumably, do act.

Finally, there are some interesting differences with regard to subjects and objects. A majority (53 %) of *Times* objects, for instance, are abstract, suggesting *The Times'* named participants often affect concepts in an intellectual discussion, whereas the figure in *The Sun* is only 33 %. Indirect objects of named participants account for slightly more (22 %) in *The Sun* than *The Times* (18 %), again perhaps due to quotations from individuals on their reactions to topical issues. Then, subjects of passives are less likely to be explicit in *The Sun* (25%) than *The Times* (40%). Since, in most respects (see Bernstein, 1971), *The Sun* and *The Times* appear to employ elements of working class and middle class discourse, respectively, the figures for agentless passives - which Kress and Hodge claim are particularly common in middle class speech - are surprising. Possibly *The Sun*'s high incidence reflects a rhetorical strategy.

Title participants

A more minor choice in both papers is title participant, referring to a person by title or position. Virtually all occurrences take actional verbs, so they are portrayed as movers, which is not surprising, since they tend to be ministers or holders of high office, whom right wing papers such as ours would predictably show to be acting consequentially on the world.

What is surprising is that the position with regards to Ts and non-Ts is reversed vis-a-vis that for named participants. This time, it is *The Sun* in which Ts are the largest category within title participants; *The Times* that employs non-Ts with a majority (60%). Broadly, therefore, *The Sun* makes them act on the world; *The Times*, perhaps, makes them speak to it. This might concord with *The Times'* image as an organ of the establishment in so far as weight is given to ministers' pronouncements (which many non-Ts would be).

The following example features a title participant theme (referred to by position) with a transactive verb. The article it comes from relates how a company selling washing machines failed to honour guarantees regarding faulty merchandise:

> An executive brushed the incident off as a rare and inexplicable fall from usual high standard (*The Sun*, 14. 10 91).

Pronoun participants

The largest group of theme types in *The Sun* and a large group in *The Times*, pronouns are slightly above average in actional potency, with 82 % and 76 % taking actionals in *Sun* and *Times*, respectively. As for relationals, those coupled with pronoun participants are relatively likely to be equatives in *The Sun*, where these account for 44 %, nearly half, of relationals (as opposed to 25 % in *The Times*). Pronouns, at least in *The Sun*, are therefore possibly more likely targets for evaluation than most theme types.

In both papers, a slight majority of pronouns take Ts, as against non-Ts and passives. This time it is *The Sun* which has more abstract objects and abstract subjects, while *The Times* employs more indirect objects. But it is *The Times*, after all, whose Ts again involve more abstract entities overall, thanks to 14 % of its pronoun Participants having both abstract subject and object (for the same verb), whereas *The Sun* has none of these. However, if either paper is to be accused of mystification through the use of agentless passives (Kress and Hodge, 1979), it is *The Sun*, of whose passives only 25% have explicit subjects, with 75% implicit.

Institution participants

Institution participants form an even larger category but, a reversal of the situation with pronouns, are particularly numerous in *The Times* (187); less so in *The Sun* (37). Their frequency of occurrence in *The Times* lends support to its image as paper of the establishment, which could be equated with the sum of its institutions. Both *Sun* and *Times* portray institution participants as actionally powerful, with well above average actional ratios of 91.9% and 86.1%, respectively.

The following example of an institution participant theme with an actional verb illustrates this:

> Last November, the Tory kingmakers offered the nation a pig in a poke to succeed the overthrown Margaret Thatcher (*The Times*, 12.10.91)

Ratios for attributives vs. equatives and Ts vs. non-Ts are similar and normal in both papers, but there is a point of interest in that, within Ts, *The Sun* has an usually large group of indirect objects. They are employed with 29 % of Ts, possibly indicating a tendency for *Sun* institutions to be relatively likely to speak, rather than act. Lastly, if there is mystification through agentless passives, in this case it is *The Times*, of whose passives only 20% have explicit subjects, as against 50% in *The Sun*. This is the more suspect because institution participants constitute such a major category in *The Times*.

Discourse participants

Discourse participants thematise the writer or paper, as agent. An insignificant option in *The Times*, discourse participant themes are widely used in *The Sun* and actionally very powerful, 91% taking actional verbs. Moreover, a large majority are transactives, so are likely to be acting on the world. Not only does *The Sun* cast itself (or the editor) in the role of actor in the text, but this actor affects the world to a greater degree, proportionally, than any other significant thematic category in *The Sun*. Since there are no indirect objects or reflexives, and abstract objects are not particularly common, we can say that discourse participants are portrayed as exceptionally consequent actors.

In the example below, the paper overtly and politically intrudes into the discourse as theme of a transactive rheme:

> We welcome Douglas Hurd's hostility to a federal Europe (*The Sun*, 10.10.91)

Politically/ gender-bound participants

Next we examined the occurrence of lateral verbs with themes that were bound, politically or gender-wise. Female participants, it transpired are disproportionately scarce in both papers. While they are actionally potent in *The Times*, those in *The Sun* frequently take relational verbs and two- thirds of the actionals are non-transactives. If this tendency were to hold with a larger data base, it would suggest that women in *The Sun* are really non-actors. Males, on the other hand, represent a major category. They are 6 times more numerous than females in *The Times*, 12 times more in *The Sun*. Despite their taking only 50% transactives among actionals as well as a relatively large number of abstract and indirect objects, males are portrayed as the prime actors on the world stage.

As for politically-bound themes, *The Times* employs relatively more government participants; *The Sun* more opposition participants. With both categories, *The Sun* uses more non-Ts, *The Times* more Ts. Moreover, *The Sun*'s opposition participants take abstract objects in 63 % of all cases, an unusually high figure, suggesting that these actors are less likely to act on real-world entities. Possibly, this paper is presenting opposition statements only to demolish them, whereas *The Times*' government participants are actionally potent.

Other nominal group themes

The three theme types in this smaller group are neither marked nor main-line unmarked themes. Rather, they are noun groups that tend to be things, places and concepts, not usually thought of as capable of acting on the world, except figuratively. As such they are often uncontroversial on the face of it. However, there are points of interest: noun group themes, firstly, give some idea, inversely, of the extent to which the discourse is limited to its obvious players - high profile individuals or groups, usually closely linked to the game of politics. The presence of noun group themes indicates a broader culture. Secondly, abstract noun groups additionally indicate a more intellectual culture. negative noun groups, lastly, lie somewhere between the marked and the unmarked and have evaluative potential by virtue of focusing on what is not (and therefore perhaps, what could or should be), rather than recording what is.

Table 2. Other Noun Group Themes v Lateral Verbs (%)

		Average		Noun Group		Abstract Noun		Negative Noun	
		S*	T*	S	T	S	T	S	T
Actional	T	46	44	36	35	12	20	50	40
	Non-T	29	19	36	20	24	12	50	47
	Passive	8	11	9	18	12	19	0	7
Relational	Attributive	11	18	18	21	41	32	0	7
	Equative	6	8	0	6	12	16	0	0

* S = Sun, T = Times

Noun group themes

The vastly broader culture of *Times* discourse, as against *Sun* discourse, is apparent from the imbalance, in the former's favour, of 147 to 11 occurrences of noun group themes, implying that the *Sun* is more narrowly restricted to politics and/or "personalities".

Figures are average, suggesting that this is a fairly neutral category: *The Times* has, relatively, somewhat more relationals; *The Sun* more actionals. *The Times* has more Ts; *The Sun* more non-Ts. Incidences of abstract object, as well as abstract subject and object, are high and those of indirect object are low, in part, at least, because non- human / institution participants do not often speak.

Abstract noun group themes

A small category (17 instances) in *The Sun*, abstract noun group themes constitute the largest category of all in *The Times* (255 instances). Here, more than anywhere else, we see the huge cultural difference between the two papers. With little other than participant themes, *The Sun*'s texts generally only discuss people, whereas *The Times'* texts feature a wealth of more academic, abstract subjects. These differences correspond in some measure, to those between working class and middle class speech, as outlined by Bernstein (1971).

Compared to participants, abstract noun group themes are weak in terms of actional power. Only 52 % in *The Times* and 47.1% in *The Sun* take actionals. Even here, *The Times*' biggest subcategory within actionals is that of Ts; *The Sun*'s non-Ts. A predictably high percentage of Ts have abstract subject and object, while a big majority of passives are agentless, in both.

The example below, from an article covering a dispute between the government, on the one hand, and the doctors, nurses and ancillary workers , on the other, shows an abstract Noun Group theme with an actional verb. Both subject and object are abstract:

> Such economic illiteracy may do credit to their trade union single-mindedness, but does none to their status as responsible "carers". (*The Times*, 11.10.91)

Negative noun group themes

This small category in both papers thematises nominals like none, nothing, no one. Actional ratings are nearly 100% and a large majority of Ts - which account for 50% of verbs with these themes in each paper - employ abstract objects. Negative noun group themes tend to be openly evaluative with far greater frequency than themes that are not negative and this is one category in which *The Times*, in particular, abandons its habitual image of impartiality to make forceful statements of opinion. The example below is taken from an article on the prospects of peace in the Middle East; an agentless passive T, reinforced by "must":

> no delegation must be allowed to use the americans, russians or other interested parties as proxy negotiators. (times, 17.10.91)

Another example, on the subject of television franchises, which can be assumed to be especially interesting to the owner, illustrates not only the coupling of a negative noun group theme with a highly evaluative rheme (viz fiasco), but acccumulates negatives in apposition to express it more strongly:

> nobody - neither minister nor television company, programme maker nor viewer - believes that the way the commercial television oligopoly was reordered yesterday was anything other than a fiasco. (times, 21.10.91).

This statement is reminiscent of *Sun* discourse in its presumption that the paper's opinions enjoy universal backing and authority. It suggests that negative noun group themes in *The Times* may have a role parallel to that of discourse participants in *The Sun*. The forceful statement, given added prominence by being the initial clause of its text, is portrayed as the opinion of ministers, television companies, programme-makers and viewers. Yet, not one of these groups is quoted, even indirectly, on the subject. Therefore, such statements are a radical departure from the paper's usual style of impartial and academic exposition.

Marked themes

The final group we examine in conjunction with their verbs is that of marked themes. Though the least dense in terms of occurrence, they possess potential for exploitation in evaluative rhetoric and, as such, are especially interesting. Unfortunately, there are so few instances of some subcategories that we can report little of significance. Nevertheless, the data give an indication of possible trends that others could investigate further.

Table 3. Marked themes v Lateral Verbs (%)

		Average		Named		Title		Pronoun		Institution		Discourse	
		S*	T*	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T	S	T
Actional	T	46	44	25	36	17	14	33	20	0	31	20	0
	Non-T	29	19	25	20	25	0	33	30	14	25	0	0
	Passive	8	11	25	18	0	0	0	30	0	90	0	0
Relational	Attributive	11	18	0	18	8	43	0	0	0	9	10	0
	Equative	6	8	0	9	8	0	0	10	0	6	10	0

* S = Sun, T = Times

It should be noted that "missing percentages" in Table 3, above, represent clauses with the given theme, but no entities as subject capable of taking lateral verbs.

B-clause themes

Easily the largest marked category in *The Times* (49), though insignificant in *The Sun*, B-clause themes (the whole initial relative clause as theme) are one of only two categories in this section of which a majority employ actionals. Figures in both papers suggest no real departure from those of unmarked themes, so we can classify these as the least marked of the marked. *The Times* still has more Ts; *The Sun* more non-Ts, but ratios are evening out generally and numbers of abstract subject and object and agentless passives are growing. Thus, B-clause themes can be classed as transitional between unmarked and marked themes as regards their verb patterns.

WH-interrogatives

WH-Interrogative themes (what, where, how .....) are the reverse of B-clause themes in so far as they are the most frequently occurring marked type in *The Sun* and one of the least common in *The Times*. They are a lot more marked than B-clauses, as the change in ratings among subcategories shows, and the fact that *The Sun*'s most common marked type is so much more marked than that in *The Times* is significant in itself. now actionals are in a minority and about half of each paper's WH-Interrogatives are not even coupled with entities capable of action. This is very different to the patterns we saw with nominal or participant themes.

Polarity interrogatives

Unlike to WH-interrogatives, *The Sun*'s polarity interrogative themes (usually BE/DO + subject) are not numerous, though they still occur relatively more frequently than in *The Times*. This is to be expected from the emerging pattern of *The Sun* which more readily makes marked choices than *The Times*, because WH-interrogatives are far more marked than the polarity variety. This is clear, for example, from the fact that actionals are back in a majority (80% in The Times, 66 % in *The Sun*) and that clauses with no entities are rarer (10% in *The Times*; 33 % in *The Sun*) than for WH-interrogatives.

Despite the above unmarked-type characteristics and the central one that polarity interrogative themes include grammatical subject, for the first time in our survey non-Ts in *The Times* (37.5%) outnumber Ts (25%). A closer look reveals that *The Times* employs them with a marked evaluative function, as rhetorical questions.

40% of polarity interrogative themes in *The Times* occur at or near the start of their text and pose dummy questions to which the rest of the text gives the answer. Among the remainder there are two categories: those that take the form of real but "loaded" questions, implying a clear yes or no, and those that are self-answering. The example below illustrates the former:

> Is Germany really willing for decisions on Yugoslavia to be taken by majority vote? (Times, 17.10.91)

The word really, which we have underlined, makes it plain that *The Times*' answer is no. Another example, from an article on art and totalitarianism, illustrates the self- answering type:

> Was not Shostakovich compromised by his public self-inculpation at Stalin's behest, despite his private views? (Times, 17.10.91)

Verb group themes

Verb group themes are a small category in *The Sun*, but the second largest marked category in *The Times*. They take various forms, sometimes overlapping with polarity interrogatives, imperatives and other theme types. They are interesting by virtue of the spectacular difference in statistics for our two papers: in *The Sun*, 86 % have no entities and only 14 % take actionals. In *The Times*, only 19 % have no entities and 66 % take actionals. However, while less marked than *The Sun*'s verb group themes, those in *The Times* are frequently evaluative. This is already hinted at by the relatively large proportion - 40% - of relationals which are equatives, for instance the example below, from the text about broadcasting franchises, gives some idea. The theme is nor is:

> nor is the outlook all gloom (*The Times*, 17.10.91)

Agreement themes

Agreement themes are those whose sentences support or complete the previous clause and cannot stand independent of it. They are insignificantly rare in *The Times*, but an important option in *The Sun*, almost always involving evaluation. The example below takes an equative relational and involves ellipsis, as is typical of them:

> All Britain needs is a single law to allow business to open when they want. This is not revolution. just freedom". (*The Sun*, 16.10.91)

Conclusion

In editorials, language is used to change attitudes (Bolivar, 1985:100).

Choices in the kinds of theme and rheme employed are among the devices contributing to effecting the change.

In this paper, we analysed themes of different kinds in conjunction with their lateral verb types. The largest group was that of unmarked participant themes and it was revealing of the sorts of people credited with acting on the world and the ways in which they acted.

Of these, pronoun participants were most numerous in *The Sun*, where they were coupled relatively frequently with equative relational verbs, which are susceptible to evaluative manipulation. In *The Times*, on the other hand, institution participants were the most numerous, in line with its image as paper of the establishment. But *The Times* could be accused of mystification, here, in view of its many agentless passives.

Discourse participants were hardly used in *The Times*, but made forceful comments in *The Sun* and were actionally more potent than any other participant category.

Huge differences were revealed between the treatment of female and of male participants. For instance, Females were a small category in *The Sun*, whereas males in the same paper were 12 times more numerous and held records for actional verbs. Thus women - a majority of the real world population - are less prominent even than the unreal discourse participants, in *The Sun*, and men are portrayed as society's prime Actors.

A parallel dichotomy between government and opposition participants highlights perhaps a double-edged tactic: the former are well represented in *The Times*, posing as paper of the establishment; the latter are far more numerous in *The Sun* - but since they are assigned a majority of non-Ts and abstract objects, among those Ts that there are, they are probably there to be evaluated, presumably negatively.

Analysis of non-participant nominal themes spotlighted a vast culture gap between *Times* and *Sun* the latter restricting itself largely to politics and personalities. Nominal group themes stood half way between the marked and the unmarked. The abstract variety was particularly numerous in *The Times*, illustrating its preference for the discussion of ideas, which was supported by record levels of relationals and a high equative ratio.

Possibly this means that *The Times* disseminates its ideology indirectly, through less overtly political topics. However, when it came to negative noun group themes, *The Times* showed its true colours, making forceful, even baseless, sweeping opinion statements and suggesting that this theme category does that for *The Times* which discourse participants do for *The Sun*.

Marked themes, finally, were scarcer than the others, but pointed to possible trends. B-clause themes were least marked followed by verb group themes next least. These were the two most common in *The Times*. The more marked choices, in which actionals became rare and many themes had no entities capable of being actors, were most common in *The Sun*, suggesting that its ideology is more foregrounded than that of *The Times*. Agreement themes and WH-interrogatives, for instance, were mainly the domain of *The Sun*.

However, we should remember that theme types can be used in different ways and are not inherently evaluative or otherwise. The balance of relational verbs to actionals, the proportion without entities, ratings for Ts and non-Ts, agentless versus explicit agent passives, and other variables, gave at least some insight into the relative evaluative potential of these choices.

> Whether (newspapers) state it or imply it, they provide us with an ideological framework which we share consciously or unconsciously. (Bolivar, 1985:96)

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